

Secretary Carolann Wicks Swearing In Ceremony Speech
Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Thank you all for being here with me today to celebrate a tremendous personal and professional achievement. I am very honored to have been nominated by Governor Minner and then confirmed by the Senate to become Delaware's next Secretary of Transportation.

I have truly been amazed by the amount of support I have received throughout the confirmation process. My family members who are here with me today have been first and foremost my biggest cheerleaders and I am very blessed to have them. Thank you!

But it has also been the kind words, the words of encouragement and the congratulatory smiles and handshakes from my DelDOT family that has touched me deeply. I have been asked several times why I would want to take this job given the many challenges DelDOT faces in the years to come. The answer is simple – we are an excellent team of professionals who work hard to provide our customers with a safe and efficient transportation system. As part of this team, I didn't think a stranger, someone who might think we need "to be fixed", would have the insights to best lead this agency. I know we have challenges and I know there will be long days ahead but in all honesty, we're used to that - we're problem solvers and we're good at it!

As Secretary, I will keep tapping into your strengths and using the knowledge and expertise we have gained over the years, to collectively work on solving our issues and problems together. As transportation professionals we are very much aware of the critical role transportation plays in the success of our state. The services we provide, the projects we deliver and the valuable assets we maintain are all essential to a thriving economy and

a great quality of life for our citizens. Unlike most other states, we are responsible for almost every aspect of transportation. From traffic signals, snow plowing, bus service, bridges and roadways, to the protection of our environmental resources, just to name a few. Our responsibilities are as diverse as they are extensive. Whether it is an emergency response during a storm event, providing back up during traffic accidents or putting our contracts to handle emergency repairs from a hurricane, the people of this organization are always there to respond, 24/7. We will need to focus our energies and resources on meeting these core transportation needs. At the same time, we will also need to educate the public and the General Assembly on what our long term priorities are if we are to sustain our quality of life and economic prosperity.

As we pursue those short and long term goals, I will ensure that an open, collaborative and informative dialogue exists between DelDOT and the members of the General Assembly. We must listen to the concerns and issues of their constituents, our customers, as we work to effectively communicate what we believe are the top transportation priorities over the next 6 years.

And ultimately, we will develop and deliver a multi-modal transportation program that helps achieve the Governor's Livable Delaware initiative. I know I can rely on your support in the months ahead to accomplish these goals.

As I look around me, I see so many friends and colleagues that I have worked with over the past 23 years. It has gone by rather quickly I'm afraid. I don't shoot shuffleboard on Friday evenings any more. Now it's pizza at Grottos with Ken and Anna. I don't play ma-john or uno at lunchtime any more either. My goal now is to just eat lunch sitting still.

But even though many things have changed over the years, there are those that remain constant. My respect for your dedication and commitment to this department and to the citizens of Delaware has never wavered. Public service is a very noble profession and I am very proud to serve with you as your new Secretary.

Thank you very much.